AN 2.17 — AN 2.17

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
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Text

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Then the brahmin Jānussoṇi went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

“What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell?”

“What they’ve done and what they’ve not done. That’s why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.”

“But what is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm?”

“What they’ve done and what they’ve not done. That’s why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

“I don’t understand the meaning of what the worthy Gotama has said in brief, without explaining the details. Worthy Gotama, please teach me this matter in detail so I can understand the meaning.”

“Well then, brahmin, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak.”

“Yes, worthy sir,” Jānussoṇi replied. The Buddha said this:

“Firstly, brahmin, someone has done bad things and not done good things by way of body, speech, and mind. So what they’ve done and what they’ve not done is why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. Furthermore, brahmin, someone has done good things and not done bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. So what they’ve done and what they’ve not done is why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

“Excellent, worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”